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FIVE MEN INDICTED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

FRESNO-- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in Fresno returned five separate indictments against five men for possession and/or receipt of child pornography.

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office in Fresno investigated four of the cases in conjunction with the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department and the Fresno County Sheriff's Department. The agencies are engaged in an ongoing effort to identify and prosecute individuals who have obtained child pornography through Internet-based file sharing programs.

United States Attorney Scott commented that, "As new technologies for sharing information emerge, unfortunately they are too quickly put to illicit uses. People should know that law enforcement is on the cutting edge of identifying those who use peer-to-peer file sharing programs to exchange child pornography photos and videos. The federal judicial system provides appropriately harsh penalties for those offenders who are caught."

The men indicted for possession of child pornography are: SCOTT BRANDENBURG, 31, of Porterville, California; JASON TARDIFF, 22, of Kingsburg, California; and JOHNNY BOUNTHAPANYA, 19, of Selma, California. Those indicted for possession, receipt, and distribution of child pornography are JEREMIAH LEE SMEDLEY, 23, of Merced, California,

and MATIAS JOSE SALVATIERRA, 37, of Modesto, California. The SALVATIERRA case was investigated by detectives with the Modesto Police Department and the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force.

If convicted, the maximum penalties under federal law for possession of child pornography are ten years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, and supervised release for three years. The maximum penalties under federal law for receipt or distribution of child pornography are twenty years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, and supervised release for three years.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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